

A  
LETTER  
TO A  
NOBLE LORD  
AT LONDON,  
From a Friend  
AT OXFORD:

Upon occasion of the late  
COVENANT  
Taken by both Houses.



Printed, February 22. 1643.

LETTER

TO LORD

OF THE

HOUSE OF

COMMONS

IN PARLIAMENT

ASSEMBLED

THE 10th

FEBRUARY 1840



A

LETTER TO A NOBLE LORD  
at *London* from a friend at *Oxford*,  
upon occasion of the late Covenant  
*taken by both Houses.*

MY LORD,



Have received your Lordships Letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> of this instant, with much more trouble and sadnesse of mind then any thing you have sent me this whole ill yeare. All your Declarations, Votes, Ordinances, and Orders with your Generall's powerfull Commission to kill and slay all good People, made not halfe that impression in me (though I have not been tender in letting you know what I think of the best of those) as your *Sacred Vow and Covenant* (as you call them) which with M. *Pym's* Speech at the Common-hall of the discovery of the great Plot (I received inclosed in your Letter) hath done. Are all your humble and earnest desires and solicitations for Peace, all your Pangs and Throwes for a Reformation in Religion, delivered at last of a *sacred Vow and Covenant* against both? Have you at last thought fit to tell the World that there is no possibility or hope of Peace, but by blood and desolation? Have M. *Burroughes*, and M. *Case* so perverted all Texts of Scripture, and Sergeant *Wild*, and M. *Glyn* so confounded all Rules of Law, that your Consciences are grown so dead to the one, and your Vnderstandings so dull to the other, that in plain English you promise God Almighty to assist any body to kill the King; and set up new Covenants of your owne,

poynt blank against your Oathes of Allegiance and Supremacy, and publish all this to the People as the Articles of your new Creed? And yet that your Lordship should tell me that your Affection and Duty to the King continues still the same you have pretended it; that you have still not only the same desire, but the same hope of Peace; and that you are confident that the Anabaptists and Brownists ( whom ~~me~~ thinks you have sworn to defend ) will shortly ship themselves for another Climate, is so strange to me, that Amazement it self is not more confounding. You tell me of a trick your Lordships have found out, to save you harmlesse from any obligation by this Oath, a *Salvo* to all your other Oathes Lawfully taken, and those being in a Diameter contrary to this, you have upon the matter engaged your selves to nothing by this new Covenant, and so have cunningly evaded the designe of the Contrivers: Oh (my Lord) can you please your selves with these shifts? Is this the Wisdome, Vigilance, Integrity, and Courage of the Highest Court of Iudicature ( for so the House of Peeres in Parliament is ) to lead the People by their Example to so solemne an Act as a Covenant with God Almighty, which at the instant you took it you intended should signify nothing? Will the poor People of England, whereof it may be too many have looked upon your example with Reverence, and thought many things fit or lawfull only because you did them, when they shall find that you have *vowed in the presence of Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, as you shall answer at the great Day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that you will, according to your power, assist the Forces raised and continued by both Houses of Parliament, against the Forces raised by the King;* will they ( I say ) think that your Lordship intended nothing by this Vow, but what you were obliged to by your Oathes of Allegiance and Supremacy, that is, to defend the King to the utmost of your Power, against all Conspiracies and attempts whatsoever, which shall be made against His Person, His Crown and Dignity, and to doe your best endeavour, to disclose and make known to Him all Treasons and Conspiracies which shall be against Him, to your power to assist all Jurisdickions, Priviledges, preheminences and Authority belonging to Him, or united to the Imperiall Crown of this Realme; and indeed to doe all things which by this your new sacred Vow you have for-

sworn



sworn to doe? Will this *Salvo* reconcile all those contradictions? &c. is this subtilty the first fruits of your *Humility and Reverence of the Divine Majesty, your hearty sorrow for your own sinnes and the sinnes of the Nation, and your true intention to endeavour the amendment of your own wayes?* For Gods sake (my Lord) talk not of preserving the true reformed Protestant Religion, and opposing Papists and Popery, when your Actions destroy the Elements of Christianity, and admit a latitude to your Conscience to introduce Atheisme, & Rules, which the Turkes in pure naturall honesty abhorre and detest. Get your self to an opinion and avow it boldly, see what you hazard, and play your game out above board, be a desperate Gamester, if you cannot be a skilfull one. & so be capable of advantage by good luck; but to becozened and cheated to serve other mens turnes, and to help to cozen your selfe by little shifts and evasions, makes you be hated by them you serve, despised by us, and will make you be laught at when you are dead.

But (my Lord) admit you were indeed too hard for them by this *Salvo*, and by the interposition of three or foure other words (*in order to the security & preservation of the true Reformed Protestant Religion &c. according to your power and vocation &c.*) had notably reserved a liberty to your selves of complying with your former Oathes; That Oathes were to be interpreted according to the Intention of the Person that takes them, (which being an instrument between God and us, and so every Covenant being to be taken strongest against our selves, cannot be admitted;) yet if another man who hath taken this vow believes himselfe obliged by it, to the utmost Act even against the Life of the King, hath not he reason to believe; that you have bound your selfe to assist that Person in what he shall doe in pursuance of that Oath? I would I were able to make an answer for you; but admit farther, that in all the promissory part which containes what you will doe, or what you will not doe, that you were safe and had engaged your selfe to doe no more or no lesse then your Duty: pray consider the positive part, what *Salvo* have you for that? you doe believe that there hath been & now is a *Popish & Traiterous Plot* for the subversion of the true reformed Protestant Religion and the Liberty of the Subject, and that in pursuance thereof a *Popish Army* hath been raised, & is now on foot in di-

*verse parts of this Kingdom;* which Army you imply to be the Army raised for the King, and therefore you promise to assist against it. Now it seems your Lordship doth not beleeeve the Preamble to be considerable, or any part of the Oath, for I am sure you cannot beleeeve any Popish or Traiterous Plot to be on this side; where the Treason is the Law will judge, and where the Papists are will best be found in the Muster-Rolls of both Armies; you have had whole Troopes of that Profession and no fault found with their Religion, till they have given over being Rebels; whilst they are with you, they defend the true Reformed Protestant Religion, but when they revolt to their Allegiance, they are Papists, and ought to be disbanded; indeed you take the course to compell the King to doe His duty, by driving them to Him for Protection, which he cannot deny to His Subjects, but you keep them from performing their duty in assisting their Prince, by stripping & Plundering, and leaving them naked to the World. In good faith (I ask pardon of Discretion and Truth for being startled) your confident discourses of Popish Armies and Supplies from Papists made me once imagine the King might in truth receive some notable Supplies from the persons of that profession, and it was not hard for me to beleeeve, that that party which felt so much rigour & cruelty from you, and were sure to suffer an utter extirpation, if you prevailed, should willingly sacrifice all they had to that Sovereigne Power which might mercifully allay that fury, and preserve them still in the number of His Subjects; but I find there is a narrownesse, a vulgar spirituednesse, and a scandalous parsimony in all Religions, even these men will have the comfort of being starved with Money in their Purses, for I am assured by those who are conversant with those Accounts, that all the Money His Majesty hath received from all the Papists of *England*, since He hath been put to raise and continue these Forces, is not halfe so much as is in truth due to Him by the Law upon those moderate Compositions made with them; And for any Assistance He hath by their personall service, you have long agoe heard (and I have reason enough to beleeeve) that the Papists in all His Armies will not make one Regiment: how many more you have, and how many more you would be glad to have, your Lordship can better judge then I.

Well,

Well, there hath been a *treacherous and horrid Designe lately discovered, to surprize the Cities of London and Westminster, and God knowes what; and you doe abhorre and detest that wicked and treacherous Designe.* 'Tis well done whether you know it or not: but what may this treacherous Designe be, that, Mr Pym sayes, would have destroyed the City and the Kingdome, and in their Ruines have buried Religion and Liberty? another Gunpowder Treason, like that of the Protestation against the first Remonstrance? The King hath sent a Commission (for now 'tis printed all the World knowes what it is) to certain persons to use their utmost power to suppress those who are in Rebellion against Him, and assist those who are oppressed by them. Is there one Popish or Popishly affected person in that Commission, or to be employed in the whole Design? Is there one Clause in it on the behalfe of Papists, or against the Liberty of the Subject? Indeed it may seem strange that the King should so much consider that Apostate City (where the Rage of loime, and the Tameness of others have made up one generall Guilt) as to offer them any countenance to releev themselves; but that it should be a horrid & treacherous Design, (when you have in all the Counties of *England* Commanders of your *Militia* and Commissioners, even at this present, to assess, rate, and collect Money for the maintenance of your Rebellious Army) for the King to be willing to have an Army in *London* or *Middlesex*, whereby all other Armies, and that too, might be speedily disbanded, will need an Orator no lesse powerfull then *M. Pym*, or his Excellency himselfe (who in these nice Arguments is the better Orator) to make evident to the World. Beleeve it (my Lord) whilst there is one honest man left in that City, there will be alwayes a Plot to reduce it to its Loyalty, and to destroy this wicked Rebellion: neither will that unparalleld Act of Inhumanity, executed upon the two famous Citizens of *Bristol* (who will live gloriously in the Annals of this Nation, as the stout Champions and Martyrs of Allegiance, when the name of their Murtherer (*Fiennes*) shall not be mentioned but with Infamy) so farre fright good men from their Duty, that your wild fury will rage long uncontroled.

Another of your propositions is, that *you doe beleeve in your Conscience, that the Forces raised by the two Houses of Parliament,*

are

are raised and continued for their just defence, and for the defence of the true Protestant Reformed Religion, and Liberty of the Subject, against the Forces raised by the King; does your Lordship in truth believe this? take it in peeces. The two Houses of Parliament, being convened by the Kings sole Writ to advise with Him about the great Affaires of the Kingdom, formed their Counsells with such successe, that in above fifteen Moneths (time enough to have reformed and repaired all former mistakes and irregularities in Church and State) they never found the least non-concurrence with them from His Majesty in any particular proposed, for the ease or benefit of the Common-wealth; what was, during that time, done by His singular Iustice and excesse of Bounty, is so well and so particularly known to all the World, that if your Treason and Rebellion were away, there would be ingratitude enough left to make you odious to the present, and infamous to succeeding Ages. When did the first Act of your defence begin? not till you came to *Edge-hill*; then I must confesse you were put to it, for it cannot be denied, the King went eight Miles out of His way to find you; from thence you took your stile of defensive Armes; except you will needs date them from the tenth of *January*, when you had been overrun by the Law, if that defensive Army of the City had not been raised to rescue and preserve the good Lord of *Kimbolton*, & his five pretious Members from a legall proceeding. In this sense you have, I confesse, been much upon the defensive part, otherwise you never pretended ground or Argument for your taking Armes, but Feares and Iealousies, no danger of an assault from an active Enemy, except some few Papiists under ground, whom your vigilaney hath kept still there. When you first voted your great Generall, and raised your wanton Army, 'twas to fetch up the King to you from *Yorke*, not to defend your selves against Him; and you cannot but know you were so farre from being in danger to be assaulted, that setting aside your acts of Hostility in your Votes and Ordinances, by which you had surprized Forts, Townes, and the whole Navy, when you had a formed Army of Horse and Foot (I believe much greater then you have now) the King had not so many Muskets as you had Cannon, nor so many Swords as you had Companies; and on my Conscience (I will so farre

farre excuse you from intending it should come to this) if you had thought He could have got any, your Lordship and many more of your good friends, who for quietnesse sake have done much mischief, would have prevented these troubles. But why are you lesse ashamed to be couzened still, then to confesse you have bin so; you expressed well in your own honest Speech, how much you have been deceived; trust them no more that deceived you, much of that is fallen out you then foresaw, the rest will follow; 'Is a misery to foresee, and not to prevent, at least bearing a part in doing the mischief which you foresee must destroy the Doers. Remember you were told, there was no Designe against Bishops to alter the Government of the Church, you see they are now inconsistent with the Protestant Reformed Religion, and a new way must be found out of Government; and then as M. Martin, and M. Morly use you now, M. Cast and M. Calamy will use you then, between both, you will be a great Lord. Remember you were promised when this Army was first raised, there should be no fighting, no Resistance (and in truth when you saw Votes could enable you to raise Armies, who had no power, 'tis no wonder you believed they could keep the King from raising any who had Power) that the King should be brought gently up to you, and you should have what Places you pleased. There hath been fighting and resistance; the King is not yet brought up to you, & I do not find the Places are like to be disposed as you desire. You were assured all possible regard was to the safety of the King, & you were your self required by your Protestation to promise to defend His Person, you have since been assured in what danger His Person hath been, by the assault of your Army, and you are now compelled to sweare you will assist that Army against Him. When will you think your self couzened enough to abhorre these men? do you not yet apprehend that these men every day, whilst they perswade you they intend a Peace, doe somewhat to make Peace impossible? Is the imprisoning the Kings Messengers who come to move you to Peace; the accusing the Queen of high Treason for loving Her Husband, and for doing that for which the present Age must reverence, and posterity will envy Her; the Murthering the two good men of *Bristol* in cold Blood (a Marther that will call for Vengeance from God, and Ju-

B

stice

rice from the King till a full explanation) and this new sacred Vow, excellent ingredients towards a Peace? Aye you awake, and doe not see those things throwne in only to make Peace impossible, but content your selfe with a Vote that your Armes are defensive, when all the distractions and all the Violence throughout the Kingdome are the effects of those Armes?

The next Article of your Creed is, that these godly Forces of yours are for the defense of the true Protestant reformed Religion. This indeed hath alwayes been your care, and your Reputation; but give me leave, to tell your Lordship I much feare you rather hate that which is not the Protestant Religion, then love that which is. I will not grieve your memory by representing to you the happy flourishing State of the Protestant Religion in this Kingdome, till your Counsells disturbed and endeavoured to deface it. Let Vs only consider what you have acted and what you have designed towards this defence, and to use your owne phrase of your Covenant *in order to the Security and preservation of this Religion*. There is not a Godly, Learned, Orthodox Divine in England, whom you have not traduced, imprisoned, or eminently reproached and discountenanced, even those whose Learning and Integrity first gave credit and reputation to your great Reformers; you have not only disused and suppressed that Excellent Book of Common-Prayer (the first and glorious instance in this Kingdome of the true Reformed Protestant Religion) but scurrilously and prophanely reviled and scoffed at it to the scandall of Christianity; you have carried your selves with such impious and debosh behaviour in Churches and Consecrated places, committing such horrid and Beastly outrages, that the Heathen themselves would tremble at the mention of them, and all this out of *pure zeale to the true Reformed Protestant Religion*. This you will say is done without your consents by the disorderly Souldiers, whom you cannot restrain. By your Lordships favour you have very pretty Votes of one or both Houses, which directly encourage those Souldiers to most of this, What Remedy have you provided for these disorders, if the King concurred with you in all you propose to your selves? you have presented Him a Bill to pull downe the whole Fabrick of Church Government, to leave Heresie, Incest, Blasphemy,



my, and Adultery, as unpunishable as any other Acts of good fellowship, to take away His Supremacy, and so cancell the Oath you have all taken to Him, and to take away Bishops, and so cancell the Oath He hath taken at His Coronation to defend and protect them, and have not yet so much as fancied amongst your selves into what shape you will lick that monstrous *Chaos* you would produce; this you leave to your Synod, of such men, as most of them no Schooles or Nurseries of Learning ever knew, men never knowne or heard of but by their Faction, Treason, and Rebellion, such who never had title or substance in the Church of *England*, till your Votes, as Patron and Ordinary, imposed them upon Parishes, and over Cures in the places of those, whose Religion was not Rebellion. Oh (my Lord) can you forget the excellent times in which you were borne, and the happy times in which you have since lived, the flourishing State of Religion here in Doctrine and Discipline, in the Lives and Learning of so many Reverend Divines famous throughout Christendome, can you so much forget this, to beleieve these courses the way to defend the true Reformed Protestant Religion? If you were a Protestant two yeates since, I am sure they are none whose directions you now follow; Is this countenancing and joyning with Anabaptists, and Brownists, (names as odious to you, and so mentioned by you even in your last Letter, as the Papists) to advance the Protestant Religion? But 'tis no wonder when you take your Rules of Allegiance and Fidelity from Traitors and Rebells, that you should take your directions of Religion from Hypocrites and Schismatiques. I doe not know your face better then your heart in this point, you are no more of my Lord *Sayes* mind in Religion, then Bishop *Wren* is; when you have recovered the Courage to love Truth againe, this Clause, if there were nothing else in your Covenant, will take your Sleep from you, and leave you no comfort, but in the Clarity of those you have endeavoured to destroy.

A word now of the Liberty of the Subject, the last pretence of your Army, and I have done. In so sad an Argument I should not be merry with you, and say, that by this Liberty of the Subject, you meane Liberty in every Subject, to doe what he list, which indeed seemes to be the proper businesse of your Army; and yet I

would you would leave men this liberty, that you would not compell them to be worse then they have a mind to be, and you would be contented to absolve them from the Law, and trust them with their owne Inclinations; though you pull downe the Inclosures, use no violence to hunt them from their knowne Pathes; let their owne love of Liberty lead them, without being driven by your fury. Consider the Liberty of the Subject before you found out this device to defend it; how strongly was it guarded and fenced by knowne, cleere, excellent Lawes, not capable of any damage or inconvenience, to which there was not a proper reparation & remedy prepared; if any little breaches had been made in this Fence (for in comparison of the gappes you have since made in it in one howe, what was done in 16. yeares before was but little) with what diligence, Industry and Bounty did His Majesty comply with you to make them up, and so finished the Worke, that if you had not taken all this monstrous paines to destroy it, your Country now had been the wonder and Envy of Christendome, in Peace, and all the Ornaments of Beauty, Plenty, and Lustre which Peace desires to be adorned with. What pressure or violation was offered to this Liberty, when you first took up your defensive Armes? See now to what degree you have advanced it, as it hath reference to our Goods and Estates, your Ordinances of sequestration, your weekly Assessments, and your Order for the 20<sup>th</sup> part, abundantly expresses your Care; as it hath reference to Our Persons, the full Gaoles in all places, and the very many Houses you have turned into Gaoles for the safe keeping of Our Liberty, will be Rare Monuments to Posterity; as it concerns Our Conscience, you need no other Evidence (though you have store) then this *your sacred Vow and Covenant*. If this be your course to defend Liberty, I would you would for variety sake practise some way to destroy it, it may be it might prove the more Sovereigne Remedy to the Common wealth. 'Tis Mr Pym's third Observation of the *evill Conscience of those who were in the late Plot, they that pretended to take Armes to defend their owne Property, obtained a Commission to violate the Property of others, they would take the Assertion of the Lawes of the Land, but assumed to them such a power, as was most contrary to that Law, to seize upon their Persons without due process.*

esse, to impose upon their Estates without Consent, to take away some lives by the Law Martiall; this is a Text I hope your Lordship will beleeve, and is so truly an instance of evill Conscience, that if His Majesty had used these words in any of His Messages or Declarations they had been Voted at least an imputation upon both Houses, and a Censure of their Proceedings. But Mr Pym may Libell against you (and in earnest you will find most of his speeches to be such) without breach of Priviledge, he hath found out too new Conservators of our Liberty which we never heard of till now, instead of King, Lords and Commons, *The Parliament, (that is the Close Committee) the City, and the Army are the three vitall parts of the Kingdome, in which (he saies) not only the well being, but the very life and being of it doth consist;* and yet they perfwade your Lordship they are willing to disband this Army. You will say these Invasions upon Liberty are the effects of these distempers, which 'tis your businesse to suppress, which being done the Subject shall have no more cause to complaine. But, my Lord, We that live at a distance have well observed that the principles and foundations for all this mischief were laid, long before your Mistresse Necessity was owned by you, long before your Armies were raised; all your Rapines, all your Plunderings & Imprisonings are not more destructive to the liberty of the Subject, then your Votes of the 15<sup>th</sup> of March; your assuming power so to declare Law, that what you said or did, was therefore Law because 'twas yours. How many men were imprisoned and undone by you, expressly against the Law and the Petition of Right? How many Acts of Parliament suspended and Actions done by you in a Diameter contrary to Acts of Parliament; so that in truth all your excesses since which you excuse by imputing them to your Army, and the raising that Army, are but superstructures upon the foundations you laid in your calmest and most undisturbed Government, and there is nothing that you of the moderate Party have since refused to consent to, which might not very well have followed from some of those propositions which even your selves have before admitted, defended, and contrived.

I have troubled your Lordship longer in this Argument then I meant, and have the vanity to beleeve, that your often reading this

over, though it be no more then you knew before, may make some impression in you, doe not think that which is in it selfe simply ill can be made good by a Vote, or that the word Parliament can give Reputation to Actions absolutely wicked in themselves: M. Pym tells you in this goodly Speech of his, *that a Parliament is but a Carcase when the freedom of it is suppressed, that if it be deprived of its own Liberty it is left without life or power to keep the Liberty of others*; Alas (my Lord) though you will answer no other part of my Letter, tell me upon your Honour, would you have taken this last Covenant, if you had had liberty to have refused it; if you had not, where is your freedom of Parliament? can you yet look upon that Assembly with reverence? think of your number, think of their quality, think sadly of their Actions, and you will easily find a way (and there is but one that I know) to evade your Covenant. It was unjustly, impiously imposed upon you, rashly, unlawfully (to say no worse) taken by you, you ought not, you must not keep it. But that's not enough, winde your self out of this Labyrinth with Courage and Magnanimity, and in your Evening doe somewhat that may redeem the faults of the day. Consider that these men who by your Assistance prosper in their bad wayes, are doing their own businessse, and every day make a Progresse to their own ends. My Lord *Say*, since all honest men have been undoing, hath bettered his own Estate above twenty thousand pounds, besides advancing his younger Sonnes to full and ample Revenues. M. Pym hath swet to purpose, and hath thrived so well in two years, that he is your equall at least. They who abhorre Bishops revenge themselves at your charge, and every Action that advances that Designe is more pleasant to them then life. Your great Generall hath the Sovereign delight of opposing the King, and having his Health drank with lowd Musique. *Pennington, Ven, Fulk, and Manwaring* are from broken, beggerly, contemptible Varlets, become your fellow Peeres, & no doubt when they have reconciled your Lordships & the Comons into one House, will have the negative voyce, (which you two have snatched from the King,) deposited in their hands. That vitall part of the Kingdom, the City, will never be trusted in your Custody who have managed all the rest so ill. If any Accident should happen, Providence or Victory to defeat them, these men have

have been good and wary Husbands, and have the fortitude to love any Country equall to their own. Is your Lordship of a constitution fit to mingle with these men? Is your Revenue improved, or Exchequer enlarged since these troubles? Is any one designe of yours satisfied by your concurrence, or can you be content to dye a Peere of *New-England*, or the Isle of *Providence*? Is not your Reputation and Interest with all good men lost, and have you one friend left whose face you knew a year before this Parliament? These are Melancholique considerations, but you must passe through them, and then if some Noble, at least honest resolution doe not possesse you, resolve to dye the last of your name, and to leave this Character behind you, That notwithstanding all your discourte and pretence of Religion, you would have turned Turke, if the Major part of both Houses, and the stronger part of the Kingdome had required you to take a Covenant to that purpose.

---

F I N I S.

---